

rights, third world countries consider that the most essential human rights are the economic rights of their citizens to the basic necessities for survival. While western countries emphasize the rights of the individual, most other countries stress equally the rights of the citizen in his society and his concurrent responsibilities to that society.

These differing approaches have hindered the development of coordinated, effective action to promote and defend human rights. Western democracies have been particularly concerned by the comparatively low priority which developing countries and Eastern European countries accord to civil and political human rights. Western countries have also been concerned by the reluctance of the UN majority to support measures to improve the UN's ability to deal with situations of gross abuses. The developing countries have on the other hand often considered western efforts and initiatives in favour of international human rights to be callous and hypocritical. They have accused us of focussing too often on the civil and political rights issues which the western democratic tradition holds dear. They consider that we have been too ready to take up human rights issues while paying insufficient attention to the economic context in which they occur.

Experience has shown that situations of severe economic hardship do impede the development of conditions and mechanisms to guarantee the enjoyment of human rights. Canada acknowledges this relationship, and accepts its responsibility to promote equally the civil and political, and economic and social rights internationally. We accept that this implies a strong commitment to international development. However, regardless of a country's level of development, we expect each nation to move progressively towards internationally accepted standards and refrain from intentional actions which serve to alienate human rights.

The gap between standards and achievement is great, and in some countries it is growing. But we must not expect rapid change. The goal of obtaining respect for human rights internationally will not be accomplished in a month or a year. We cannot coerce governments to behave decently towards their citizens, even assuming that we know the facts in each case.